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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001093

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/07/2018  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PNAT](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: NSA RUBAIE ON CURRENT SECURITY ISSUES AND  
BLACKWATER CONTRACT RENEWAL

REF: BAGHDAD 1066

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Patricia A. Butenis for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S) SUMMARY: During a meeting on April 6 with the Charge d'Affaires, Iraqi National Security Advisor (NSA) Rubaie called the April 5 Declaration by the Political Committee for National Security (PCNS) a breakthrough. It had isolated the Sadrists, he said, and forced them to choose whether or not they wished to remain a part of the political process. Concerning the current security situation, he described the government's focus in Basrah as recruitment of new security forces and the provision of services. Sadr City was more complicated, he lamented, calling it a difficult law and order problem. The situation was complicated by the so-called "million-man protest march" by Sadrists on April 9 which the government would allow, but strictly control its security aspects. Rubaie confirmed Deputy Foreign Minister Hamoud as lead negotiator for the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) but admitted the GOI had not finalized the lead or the negotiating team for the Strategic Framework negotiations. On the Blackwater contract renewal, Charge said the USG was continuing to work with the joint Iraqi-U.S. Commission and noted that the number of "escalation-of-force" incidents had decreased. She added that Blackwater's Iraqi lawyers were working closely with the Iraqi Interior Ministry on licensing procedures. Based on this cooperation, the USG believed the Iraqi government was apprised of its intention to continue this contract. Rubaie responded that the Prime Minister had just given an interview with CNN without this specific information and said this might cause a discrepancy between the Iraqi and U.S. press statements which he hoped both sides could mitigate. END SUMMARY.

PCNS Declaration a "Breakthrough"

12. (S) During a meeting on April 6 with the Charge d'Affaires, PolMil M/C Ries and NSC Senior Director McGurk, the Iraqi National Security Advisor (NSA) Rubaie described as a "breakthrough" the April 5 Declaration by the Political Committee for National Security (PCNS) (Reftel). Of the fifteen points, Rubaie related that the two most contentious for the Sadrists representatives were support for the government's crackdown in Basrah and agreement to immediately disband militias as a condition for continued participation in the political process. As the negotiations stretched into the night, he described the two Sadrists as increasingly isolated and said they were repeatedly challenged to declare whether their party intended to remain inside the Iraqi political process or not. Rubaie added that he considered the Declaration's tenth point one of the most important -- condemnation of neighboring country interference (i.e. Iran)

in Iraqi internal affairs. He assessed the agreement and implementation of the Strategic Framework and the Status of Forces Agreement as the most helpful assistance the USG could offer Iraq on this point. Rubaie told us that Prime Minister Maliki is also considering an appeal to the UN on this issue and could bring it up in discussions with the NATO SecGen in a few weeks. McGurk urged Rubaie and the GOI to take advantage of the political momentum offered by this Declaration, perhaps with a speech this week by the Prime Minister explaining the fifteen agreed points to the Council of Representatives (CoR). Rubaie said that was under serious consideration. (Note: Per septel, Maliki has expressed concern to others that such a speech could prompt the Sadrists to walk out of the CoR, stealing the media focus away from his message. End note.)

#### Current Security Situation in Basrah and Sadr City

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13. (S) Turning to current security situation, Rubaie said the current government focus in Basrah was the recruitment/processing of new security forces ("Sons of Basrah") and the provision of essential services like electricity, water, and medical care. He confirmed that acting Minister of Justice Safa was in charge of the distribution of a \$100 million emergency aid package and that Deputy Prime Minister Salih was developing a longer range services response. Regarding Sadr City, Rubaie said the biggest challenge will be the upcoming, self-described "million-man march" on April 9. Although a similar march took place last year in Najaf, its current potential to ignite additional violence in Baghdad prompted Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to develop an extensive security plan. Rubaie explained the goal as protecting legitimate protesters taking

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part in the march and preventing Special Group Criminals (SCG) from transforming it into a platform for violence. In that regard, the GOI had three requirements for the Sadrism party: the march would occur wholly inside Sadr City, the Sadrists would accept ISF protection, and there would be no overtly provocative acts. Rubaie reiterated that government operations in Sadr City remained a law and order -- not a political -- issue.

#### Update on SOFA Negotiator

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14. (S) Answering a query from McGurk, Rubaie clarified the role of Deputy Foreign Minister Hamoud as the chief Iraqi negotiator in the upcoming SOFA negotiations. He added they had not determined who would be their lead for the Strategic Framework negotiations and admitted they had not yet designated all the team members either.

#### Blackwater Contract Renewal

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15. (S) In response to earlier questions from Rubaie about renewal of the Blackwater contract, Charge explained that the USG was continuing to work with the joint Iraqi-U.S. Commission formed to examine the incident and had already implemented many changes in procedures for the personal security details. She noted that the number of "escalation-of-force" incidents had decreased dramatically and there was an increased emphasis by security teams on maintaining respect for Iraqi citizens. She added that Blackwater's Iraqi lawyers were working closely with the Iraqi Interior Ministry on licensing procedures. Based on this cooperation, the USG believed the Iraqi government was apprised of its intention to continue this contract. But the Charge pointed out that this renewal would be subject to reversal pending the outcome of the FBI investigation into the incident which occurred last September. Although Rubaie appeared satisfied with this explanation, he told the Charge that Prime Minister Maliki had already given an interview

with CNN earlier in the day without this specific information and suggested there could be a public disconnect between the Iraqi and U.S. press statements which he hoped to mitigate.  
BUTENIS